

City of Troy, New York

5-Year CP Strategic Plan 2005-2009

Executive Summary (UPDATED)

This Consolidated Plan covers fiscal years 2005 through 2009. It is prepared in compliance with requirements of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a plan and an application for funding under four formula grant programs: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), HOME Investment Partnerships including the American Dream Downpayment Initiative (ADDI), and Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG). This document presents a strategic plan to address the three goals established by federal statute for these programs: providing expanded economic opportunities, providing a suitable living environment, and providing decent housing. These programs are primarily aimed to benefit persons and families of low to moderate income, i.e., median annual family income from \$ 35,550 (household of one) to \$ 67,050 (household of eight) as of February 2005.

At present, the City of Troy is an “entitlement” city and, therefore, is entitled to receive CDBG funding every year based on a formula. President Bush recently proposed major changes to the CDBG program to become effective in fiscal year 2006, if adopted by Congress. The President’s proposal includes a 30% reduction in the CDBG program, moving the \$4.7 billion program from HUD to the Department of Commerce and reducing it to \$3.7 billion, targeting economic development rather than poverty, and eliminating the entitlement status of communities like Troy. Until such time that the Congress approves the proposed changes to the CP program, the city has an obligation to prepare a 5-Year Strategic Plan as a framework

for improvement of the City of Troy and the conditions affecting its low-moderate income residents.

Information gathering to inform the preparation of this Plan began with a series of neighborhood meeting held by Mayor Tutunjian. To further explore the issues raised by the public at the Mayor's meeting four focus groups were established: Neighborhood Livability, Economic Opportunity, Housing, and Homelessness and Poverty Services. These focus groups developed a series of strategies and preliminary priorities for presentation to Troy residents for their input.

Based on those preliminary priorities, public presentation of draft priorities in a series of public meetings, and receipt of comments to date, the following priorities are established for the Consolidated Plan 5-Year Strategic Plan. The focus of the priorities is raising incomes of Troy residents through economic development rather than by continuing to subsidize poverty.

Neighborhood Livability

- Implement targeted code enforcement in North Central and South Troy (similar to Neighborhood Improvement through Code Enforcement – NICE – previously implemented in Beman Park).
- Continue the Civil Enforcement/nuisance abatement program in targeted blocks to address quality of life and other pre-crime problems. Remove the enabling conditions of the problems.
- Apply to Justice Department for “Weed and Seed” and other sources for funding to fully implement the Community Policing program.
- Coordinate infrastructure improvements in downtown, targeted neighborhoods, and other parts of the City on the basis of a 3-year plan that is updated annually. Include sidewalks, street paving, lighting, utilities, street trees, etc. Give priority to infrastructure improvements that enhance both neighborhood livability and economic opportunity.

- Coordinate mixed-use housing programs and economic development programs especially in downtown along the River Street corridor in North Central, and on the Waterfront.
- Address vacant buildings through a combination of stabilization / demolition programs, particularly addressing city-owned vacant buildings and properties when the next rounds of in-rem properties comes up. Improve City surplus property disposal procedures / qualifications for participation, to improve results with sold properties. Create a CDBG-funded vacant building stabilization revolving fund to permit City to stabilize buildings before sale so that the investment can be recouped upon the sale of the stabilized building and reused for stabilization work.
- Assist neighborhood-sponsored projects that increase pride, safety, and investment in the city's neighborhoods, particularly the targeted priority neighborhoods (e.g. tree planting, parks and playgrounds, special trash removal projects, signage, lighting, facilities, etc.).
- Work with developers to get residential development in downtown so Troy's downtown will include a mix of uses.
- Eliminate a major inconvenience of living in central Troy neighborhoods by making everyday community retail available in a location central to the neighborhoods, preferably downtown.

Economic Opportunity

- Fund and implement grant and loan programs for the rehabilitation of existing commercial buildings and the development of businesses in commercial properties city-wide, but particularly emphasizing downtown Troy. Link grant /loan investments within buildings and to businesses to the creation of jobs.
- Submit grant applications for other economic development grant opportunities, as they come available.
- Commission an entities, such as the Troy Industrial Development Agency and the Troy Local Development Corporation, that will serve as the vehicles to implement economic opportunity initiatives.
- Develop Job Opportunity Areas as places where new businesses can locate as employment centers for their neighborhoods.

- Re-use existing large or underutilized commercial or industrial real estate.
 - Establish criteria and fund projects to minimize adverse impacts on adjacent residential neighborhoods.
 - Target businesses that train and employ low-moderate income workers.
 - Investments must be linked to job creation.
 - Sites should be accessible via public transit.
- Find space for additional “incubator” opportunities in Downtown to retain / develop high-paying jobs.
 - Use Brownfields Economic Development Initiative (BEDI - \$2 mil grant + \$3 mil loan) in South Troy industrial area – (Adams to Burden, Hudson River to First). Facilitate redevelopment of brownfields properties in the central neighborhoods of Troy, particularly along the waterfront.
 - Land bank vacant buildings and vacant lots along River Street and 6th Avenue in the North Central neighborhood.
 - Target 25% to 30% of CDBG infrastructure improvements to those areas that enhance economic opportunities.
 - Encourage positive image of Troy in the media.
 - Develop and oversee a comprehensive and coordinated job training and placement strategy utilizing existing resources, such as the Capital District Workforce Investment Board, and linking them to the public housing services, poverty services and homeless housing services agencies needs in order to develop family and individual self-sufficiency programs.
 - Look for innovative ways to train un-employed and under-employed people utilizing the resources of the Troy Housing Authority, Hudson Valley Community College, and other organizations.
 - Examine ways to connect employees and businesses with jobs and customers through enhanced parking opportunities downtown and enhanced transit.
 - Encourage the location and development of businesses serving the regular shopping needs of residents of the central Troy neighborhoods, particularly in the downtown area.
 - Develop and implement a plan to capitalize on heritage tourism and historic resources.
 - Re-establish an after-school/daycare provider coordinating council to substantially increase and enhance services through non-CD funds.

Housing

Existing Neighborhoods

- Develop incentives for households making 80% to 125% of median income to buy and invest. Attract young homeowners whose income is above “just making it”. Also attract “empty-nesters” with significant disposable incomes. Use 5-year tax abatement incentive to encourage rehabilitation of existing buildings and new in-fill home construction that is architecturally compatible and meets the density goals for the neighborhoods in census tracts 401 through 410.
- Implement a 5-year targeted code enforcement program, targeting and completing work in the North Central and South Troy neighborhoods.
- Revise the existing zoning ordinance to down zone large existing residential areas of Troy from R3 and R4 zoning to R1 and R2 zoning.
- Increase owner-occupancy. Incentivize owner-occupancy of two-family homes to meet the needs of low-moderate income population. Strive to advance Section 8 tenants toward homeownership through THA programs to reduce the demand for permanent subsidized housing.
- Review the full range of existing housing programs and policies and revise them as required to encourage growth of a balanced community.
 - Implement an exterior paint program to assist eligible low-mod income owner-occupants to improve and maintain the exteriors of homes by reducing LBP risks and aiding the appearance of their neighborhoods.
 - Implement a small grant rehabilitation program to assist eligible low-mod income owner-occupants to improve the exteriors of homes and undertake small scale code violation repairs.
 - Implement a moderate rehab housing rehabilitation grant program to assist eligible low-mod income owner-occupants to rehabilitate and invest in existing homes that require repair/replacement of major systems in addition to small code violation repairs.
 - Develop and implement a vacant building stabilization program that prevents loss of existing structures by protecting them from serious building deterioration causes that would otherwise result in building demolition.
 - Housing rehabilitation programs are to assist in preserving, restoring and maintaining the architectural character of Troy’s historic neighborhoods.

- Maintain the historic character of Troy's housing stock and neighborhoods by incentivizing investment in appropriate rehabilitation of older housing stock.
- Incentivize de-densification of dwellings (two-and multi-family to single-family owner-occupancy).
- Explore the feasibility of a housing registry or clearing house to connect prospective tenants and home-owners with code-compliant dwellings.

Subsidized Housing

- Recognizing that Troy has the highest per capita ratio of public housing in upstate New York, effect a reduction in public housing units by not replacing units that become obsolete.
- Reduce the concentration of Section 8 and public housing units, particularly in deteriorating, high density neighborhoods.
- Counsel regarding housing location should be provided to Section 8 voucher holders and the Troy Housing Authority jurisdiction outside City limits should be maintained and expanded.
- Shift the emphasis of subsidized housing providers to address and include facilities and services that promote tenant transition to self-sufficiency (including opportunities for day care services, after school care services, transportation, life-skills counseling, job training, homeownership skills training, etc.). Providers with site-based facilities should promote and make space available as follows.
 - participate with a revived day care / after school care coordinating council for those services to be made available to low-moderate income families in the nearby neighborhoods.
 - participate with CDTA to assure that low-moderate income families have access to public transit.
 - participate with agencies such as Economic Opportunity Council (EOC), Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO), Hudson Valley Community College, etc. for job training and placement for low-moderate income persons.
 - participate with agencies such as CEO, Troy Rehabilitation and Improvement Program (TRIP), etc. for training in life skills, being a tenant, and homeowner skills.

- Determinations of consistency with the 5 year Consolidated Plan will be made by the City for all proposed applications for housing programs in Troy regardless of the organization applying for the funding.
- Site Plan Approval from the Troy Planning Board will be required for all Troy Housing Authority site improvements that change numbers of units and make substantial site changes so that resulting environments meet current standards.
- Conduct a detailed study of needs for and capacities of public housing, site-based Section 8 housing, tenant-based Section 8 housing, tax credit projects, senior housing, and senior housing with assisted living to determine if needs match capacity in order to supplement information from the last census. Continue developing the subsidized housing needs assessment (for both housing and homelessness agencies and programs) to guide future program development to meet needs within the community, but to meet needs within the context of the county-level and regional-level.

Homelessness and Poverty Services

- Shift the emphasis of all entities providing poverty services, homeless housing services and other special needs services away from providing institutionalized supports and towards services that promote a transition to self-sufficiency (including job training, life-skills counseling and day care, in addition to emergency food, clothing and shelter services.)
- Determinations of consistency will be made by the City for all proposed applications for housing programs in Troy regardless of the organization applying for the funding.
- Implement the HMIS program and use it as a tool to manage the delivery of homelessness services.
- Fully explore mechanisms that will enable the City to identify systemic sources of homelessness and develop alternative strategies to prevent homelessness.

Other

- Recognize the uniqueness of Troy's 7-mile-long waterfront as an asset to neighborhood liveability, economic opportunity, and housing.
- Hire a grantwriter to apply for grants that advance the Strategic Plan.
- Improve responsiveness to citizen inquiries.

- Decrease dependence on CD funding across the full range of Consolidated Plan programming.
- The City of Troy is required to review all proposed HUD-funded projects and programs for consistency with the City of Troy's 5-Year CP Strategic Plan. Submit local recommendations regarding required reforms to HUD and other public policy makers, as necessary to advance Troy Strategic Plan goals and objectives.

It is the policy of the City of Troy to implement reforms in public housing, Section 8 housing, and homelessness services to provide for the most critical needs while “de-institutionalizing” those who have come to see these facilities as long-term, permanent accommodations. The basis for this policy is the need to remove this “institutional” mind-set in which these accommodations are seen as an end, and replace it with a desire to use these accommodations temporarily on the way to something better. Enabling this shift will be various programs to equip residents to become self-sufficient, including job-training and placement, child care, home-ownership training, and assistance with purchasing a home and renovating it to meet code and to contribute to the quality of its neighborhood.